

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 15381 250612Z

10

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

RSR-01 /084 W

----- 052668

R 250410Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6412

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15381

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, VS

SUBJ: RETURN TO TRI TAM DISTRICT

FOLLOWING CABLE SENT ACTION AE SAIGON PRIORITY INFO
AMCONSUL CAN THO DANANG NHA TRANG AUG 21 FROM BIEN HOA
BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

BIEN HOA 0425

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, VS

SUBJ: RETURN TO TRI TAM DISTRICT

SUMMARY: REPORTING OFFICER RETURNED TO TRI TAM DISTRICT AFTER AN
ABSENCE OF ONE YEAR AND A HALF TO ASSESS DIFFERENCES, IF ANY.
HE FOUND SITUATION HAS SLIPPED SOMEWHAT FROM HIS LAST VISIT.
ABOUT 1500 PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN AREAS OCCUPIED BY PRG, AND
POPULATION UNDER GVN CONTROL IS NOW AROUND 10,000 AS COMPARED TO
13,000 OR SO DURING LAST VISIT. GVN OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN
ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF PRG USING SOUTHERN PART OF DISTRICT AS
FOOD SUPPLY POINT. SENATE ELECTIONS ARE GENERATING LITTLE
ENTHUSIASM; PEOPLE SEEM TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT SLATES 1 AND 2
WILL CAPTURE MAJORITY OF VOTES. END SUMMARY.

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1. TRI TAM DISTRICT, IDENTIFIED BY MANY SOURCES AS THE LEAST SECURE OF THE SIX DISTRICTS OF BINH DUONG PROVINCE, SEEMS TO HAVE SLIPPED SOMEWHAT SINCE THE REPORTING OFFICER'S PREVIOUS TOUR OF DUTY IN PROVINCE. DISTRICT OFFICIALS WITH WHOM THE REPORTING OFFICER SPOKE ALL AGREE THAT THE GVN'S POSITION IS NOW NOT AS GOOD AS IT WAS PRIOR TO CEASE-FIRE I. THE POPULATION UNDER GVN CONTROL IS ESTIMATED TO BE AROUND 10,000. THIS COMPARES UNFAVORABLY WITH THE 13,000 OR SO IT CONTROLLED IN EARLY 1972. THE MOST RECENT POPULATION FIGURES SHOW THAT ABOUT 1,500 PEOPLE NOW RESIDE IN PRGR OCCUPIED AREAS IN SOUTHERN TRI TAM. NONE OF THE POPULATION WAS UNDER VC CONTROL IN EARLY 1972. THIS NUMBER IS DECREASING, HOWEVER. PEOPLE IN THIS AREA ARE RETURNING TO GVN CONTROL WHENEVER THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF. SOURCES COULD NOT PINPOINT WITH ANY EXACTNESS THE NUMBER WHO HAVE RETURNED, SAY, SINCE CEASE-FIRE I.

2. THE MAIN CONCERN OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS IS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE PRG EXPLOITING SOUTHERN TRI TAM, NEAR THE SAIGON RIVER, AS A FOOD SUPPLY POINT FOR ITS FORCES.

3. SENATE ELECTIONS IN THIS DISTRICT GO ALMOST UNNOTICED. INTEREST IS MINIMAL AT BEST. MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT SLATES 1 AND 2, THE ONLY ONES WHO SEEM TO BE ADVERTISED, WILL WIN WITHOUT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

4. ONE OF THE DISTRICT OFFICIALS EXPRESSED WORRY ABOUT THE U.S. DECISION TO HALT BOMBING IN CAMBODIA. HE VIEWS OUR DECISION AS A WITHDRAWAL OF OUR SUPPORT TO THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT. HE SAID HE HAS HEARD THE GVN IS RECRUITING SEVERAL THOUSAND RETIRED GVN SOLDIERS OF CAMBODIAN ORIGIN IN THE DELTA TO FIGHT AS "MERCENARIES" FOR GKR. SIGNED WALKINSHAW
UNQUOTE.
MARTIN

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NNN

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